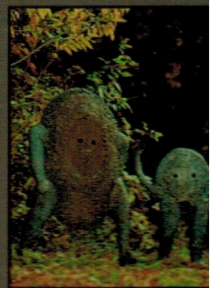
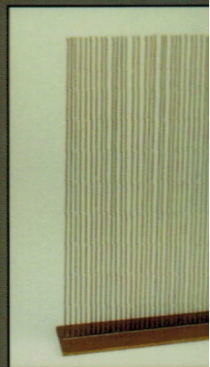
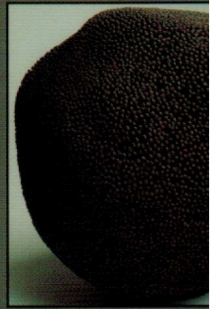
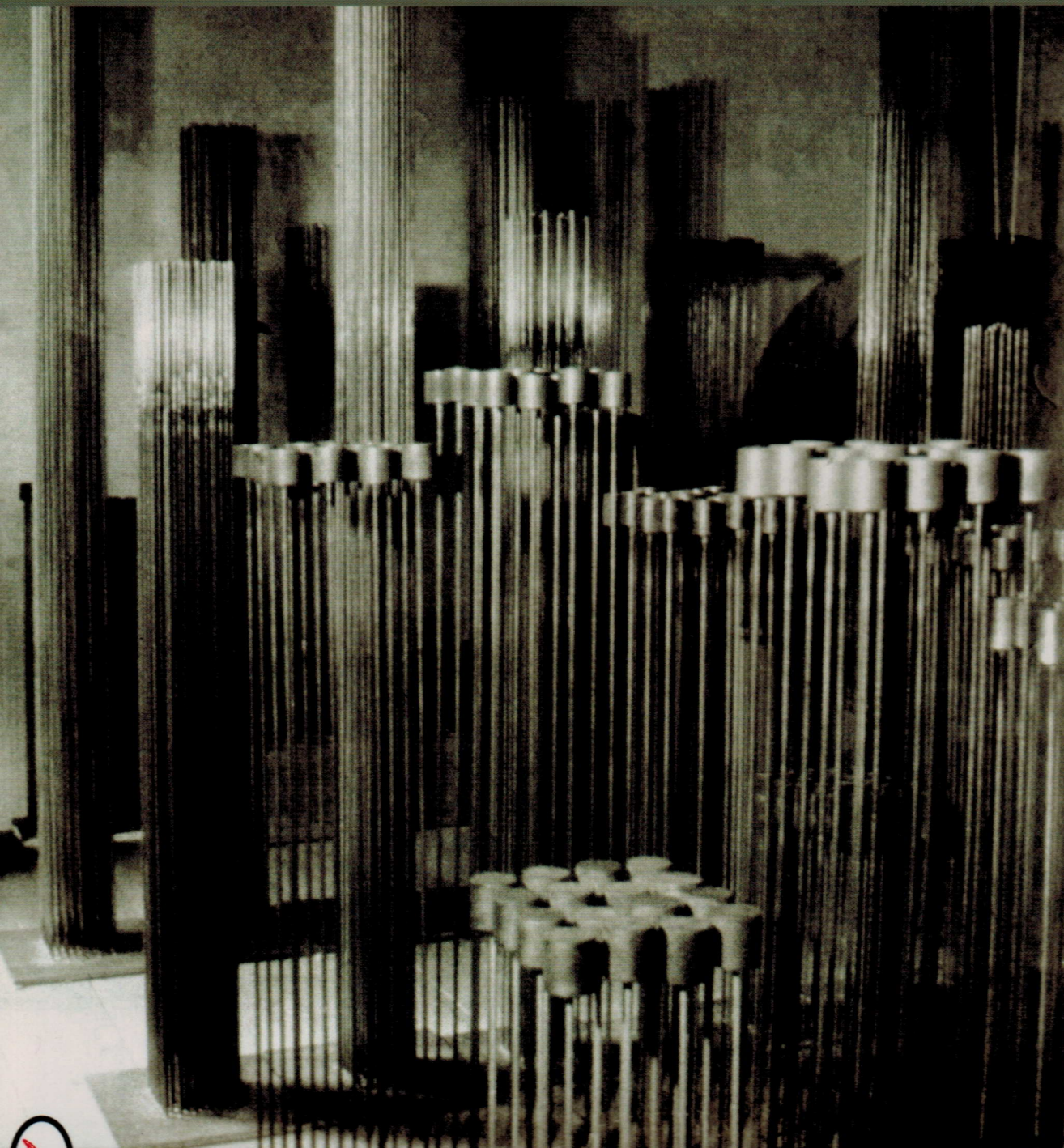


THE WORLD OF  
**BERTOIA**

NANCY N. SCHIFFER & VAL O. BERTOIA



## PREFACE

He was a charming character who saw the beauty of the world through his wonderful clear blue eyes. His ability to create was endless...Harry was a Renaissance man. He was knowledgeable in science, geology, and astronomy. I learned this from taking long walks with him in East Hampton.

FLORENCE KNOLL BASSETT, 2002

The facts of Bertioia Studio's output, development, and innovations are presented here, as much as possible, in the words of the artists and firsthand observers, rather than through critical opinion. This seemed to be the best way of relating the ideas about the works and sources for the designs, especially because almost none are titled or signed by the artist. The works were intended to stand alone and communicate directly with observers, without the handicap of a prejudicial title. This philosophy is respected and continued in this study.

A time-line in bold type has been superimposed on the text to furnish a chronological sequence. The works, however, are discussed in their respective subsections.

The major groupings, or "periods," into which his work falls have been neatly summarized in their general order of appearance in a very quickly done schematic drawing (below) made by Harry Bertioia for John Willenbecher during the summer of 1957. It should be stressed that this is merely a general chronological sequence showing only the very basic forms; in reality each of them represents only a main heading under which a great many variations should appear. Since the time sequence is of relatively little importance, we shall pay more attention examining the various works than trying to place them in their accurate chronological order.

All of these works are consistent in the excellence of their craftsmanship and in their integration of structure, material, and process. They are almost always unique. As the artist worked out different problems from piece to piece, they display a development, but each work is an individual step along a pathway.

The actual execution of any Bertioia work is a marvel of craftsmanship, literally a jewel. So precise is his geometry, so perfect his welding, and so articulate his logic that instead of

calling attention to the artist as an extraordinary individual (virtuosity at its egotistical worst) Bertioia's immaculate technique transcends the personal.

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY CATALOG,  
1977

The assistance of a highly talented staff has always contributed to the output of Bertioia Studio. In this regard, we identify Neal Ackerman, Jim Flanagan, Ed Flanagan, Klaus Ihlenfeld, Val Bertioia, William Connell, Greg Yost, Dave Plum, and Melissa Strawser who each have used their talents to accomplish the fine craftsmanship for which the studio is known.

"I worked with Harry for 17 years. It was the best time of my life."

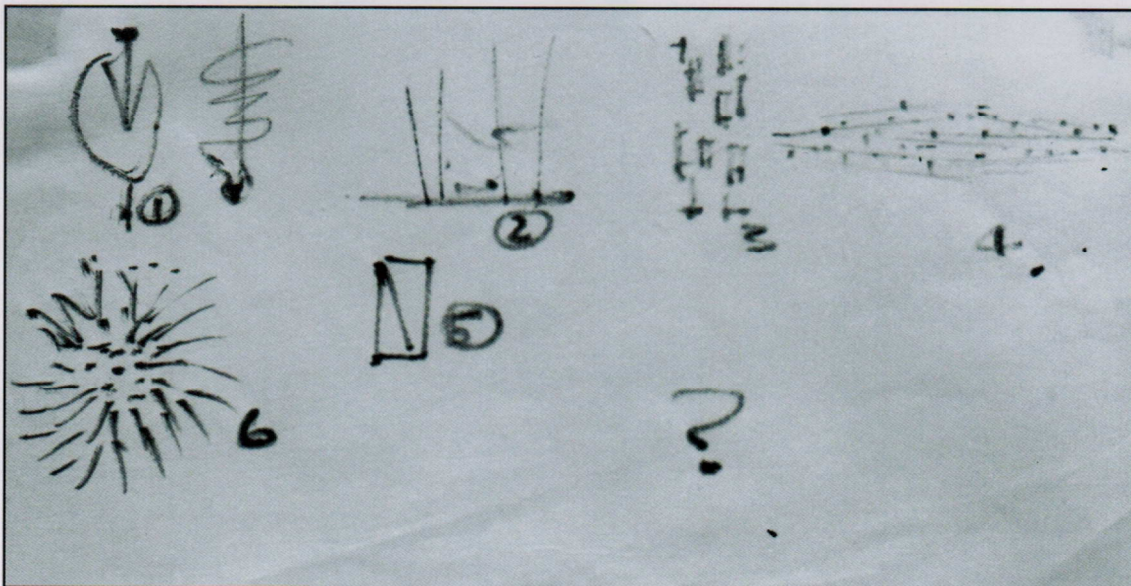
ED FLANAGAN, 2002

Harry Bertioia made up his own creative process. From God and Nature, he had dreams that gave him the inspiration to express himself and the world around him through drawings, jewelry, small sculptures, chairs, major commissioned sculptures, architecture, landscaping, and Sonambient™. His philosophy kept his life and career to be self-improving. He did more in one lifetime than nine men could do collectively.

Works from Bertioia Studio are seen on the campuses of many universities in Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, New York, and other states. Museums that include Bertioia sculpture, prints, and seating in their collections are widely distributed internationally, including the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, D.C., The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

As a collector of Bertioia sculpture, I have raised questions about a particular work's relation to the artist's career, experiences, and interests that helped to shape the organization and content presented here. A great deal of time was spent in keeping the critique to a minimum.

NANCY N. SCHIFFER, SPRING, 2003



Harry Bertioia. 1957. Drawing made to summarize, in their general order of appearance, the major groupings into which his work fell up to that date: 1) jewelry, 2) line sculpture, 3) panel sculpture, 4) clouds, 5) welded sculpture, 6) dandelions. Courtesy of John B. Willenbecher